



**Department of Energy**  
Washington, DC 20585

**GUIDANCE ON DOCUMENTING COMPLIANCE WITH THE RECOVERY  
ACT BUY AMERICAN PROVISIONS**

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** May 24, 2010

**SUBJECT: GUIDANCE FOR RECIPIENTS OF RECOVERY ACT FINANCIAL  
ASSISTANCE FROM THE OFFICE OF ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND  
RENEWABLE ENERGY ON DOCUMENTING COMPLIANCE WITH THE  
RECOVERY ACT BUY AMERICAN PROVISIONS.**

**PURPOSE:** To provide information on the roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders in documenting compliance with section 1605 (the Buy American provisions) of the Recovery Act.

**SCOPE:** This guidance applies to State, Local and Tribal Government recipients and sub-recipients (grantees and subgrantees) of Recovery Act financial assistance from the Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (EERE).

**LEGAL AUTHORITY:** Section 1605 of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Recovery Act; Pub. L. 111-5) sets forth the Buy American provisions for recipients of Recovery Act financial assistance.

**DEFINITIONS: Public building or public work** means a public building of, or a public work of, a governmental entity (the United States; the District of Columbia; commonwealths, territories, and minor outlying islands of the United States; state and local governments; and multi-state, regional, or interstate entities which have governmental functions). These buildings and works may include, without limitation, bridges, dams, plants, highways, parkways, streets, subways, tunnels, sewers, mains, power lines, pumping stations, heavy generators, railways, airports, terminals, docks, piers, wharves, ways, lighthouses, buoys, jetties, breakwaters, levees, and canals, and the construction, alteration, maintenance, or repair of such buildings and works.

Indian tribes are also considered governmental entities for the purpose of defining “public building or public work” and are therefore subject to the Buy American provisions of the Recovery Act.

**A manufactured good** is defined as a good brought to the construction site for incorporation into the public building or work that has been processed into a specific form and shape or combined with other materials to create a material that has a different property than the individual raw materials.

There is no requirement with regard to the origin of components or subcomponents in manufactured goods used in a project, as long as the manufacturing occurs in the United States.<sup>1</sup>

**GUIDANCE:** Recipients of EERE financial assistance funded by the Recovery Act must comply with the requirement in section 1605 that all of the iron, steel, and manufactured goods used for a project for the construction, alteration, maintenance, or repair of a public building or public work be produced in the United States, unless one of the three listed exceptions applies and EERE issues a waiver, or a recipient can legally avail itself of the United States' obligations under international agreements.

Recipients should retain documentation that supports their compliance with the Buy American provisions. During post-award monitoring activities, which may include desk reviews, on-site reviews, audits, and other activities, recipients may be asked to produce records sufficient to verify compliance with the Recovery Act Buy American provisions.

Such documentation could include: (1) language in contractual documents that obligates sub-recipients and/or contractors to comply with the Buy American provisions; (2) receipts for items produced domestically indicating such; (3) a documented certification from the contractor, vendor, distributor, supplier, or manufacturer verifying that the product was manufactured domestically; (4) detailed and verifiable information supporting the claim that the manufactured good has undergone substantial transformation in the United States; and/or (5) other reasonable documentation per the discretion of the state, local, or tribal government financial assistance recipient demonstrating compliance with the Buy American provisions.

There are no specific requirements imposed by the Recovery Act or the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) guidance in 2 CFR 176 concerning the type of documentation necessary to prove compliance with the Recovery Act Buy American provisions. Therefore, grantees are encouraged to reference their obligations under the Department of Energy's Financial Assistance Rules, 10 CFR Part 600 and their individual financial assistance award provisions.

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<sup>1</sup> See 2 CFR 176.70(a)(2)(ii).

## **Department of Energy Financial Assistance Rules**

### *State Recipients*

According to the Department of Energy's Financial Assistance Rules found at 10 CFR § 600.220, "Standards for financial management systems," Section (a) and sub-section (a)(2), "A State must expend and account for grant funds in accordance with State laws and procedures for expending and accounting for its own funds. Fiscal control and accounting procedures of the State, as well as its subgrantees and cost-type contractors must be sufficient to -- ...[p]ermit the tracing of funds to a level of expenditures adequate to establish that such funds have not been used in violation of the restrictions and prohibitions of applicable statutes." Additionally, according to 10 C.F.R. § 600.237(a)(1), States shall ensure that every subgrant includes any clauses required by Federal statute and executive orders and their implementing regulations (including the Buy American provisions).

### *Local Government and Tribal Recipients*

The Department of Energy's Financial Assistance Rules found at 10 CFR § 600.220, "Standards for financial management systems," Section (b)(2) *Accounting records*, states that "[g]rantees [other than States] and subgrantees must maintain records which adequately identify the source and application of funds provided for financially-assisted activities..."

For purposes of Buy American documentation, the types of documentation identified in the list above (numbers 1-5) should be sufficient to satisfy the requirements set forth for State, local governments, and tribal recipients in the Financial Assistance Rules.

However, States, local governments and tribes are encouraged to consult with their General Counsel's offices, to ensure compliance with the Buy American provisions and 10 CFR § 600.220(a) and (b) more broadly.

## **OMB Circular A-133**

In addition to the procurement documentation guidance provided above, grantees should also be mindful of the standard Federal assistance audit guidance defined in OMB Circular A-133 for state and local governments.

The DOE Acquisition and Financial Assistance Implementation Guide for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 [p. 3-3, section 3.4(1)] states: "Non-Federal entities (States, local governments, tribes and non-profit organizations) are required by the Single Audit Act Amendments of 1996 (Single Audit) and OMB Circular A-133, to have an annual audit of the federal awards (e.g. grant programs)." This requirement generally applies to Non-Federal entities that expend \$500,000 or more in Federal awards in a fiscal year, and stipulates that they shall have a single or program-specific audit conducted for that year, in accordance with the provisions of OMB Circular A-133. Recipients are encouraged to review OMB Circular A-133, Subpart B, Sections 200

through 235 for the audit requirements for Non-Federal assistance recipients. Additionally, recipients should review the Federal Audit Clearinghouse website for instructions on how to appropriately submit Single Audits.

**Single Audit Information for Recipients of American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Funds** (2 CFR 176 Subpart D and OMB A-133 Compliance Supplement: Appendix VII)

Recovery Act financial assistance recipients subject to OMB Circular A-133 should also closely follow 2 CFR 176.210 (Subpart D) and OMB A-133 Compliance Supplement: Appendix VII, general instructions regarding recipient responsibilities for tracking and documenting sub-recipient expenditures of Recovery Act funds on the Schedule of Expenditures of Federal Awards” (SEFA).

**Sub-awards, Sub-recipients and Vendors**

The Special Terms and Conditions applicable to Recovery Act funded projects require that the financial assistance recipient flow down the Recovery Act special terms and conditions in any subaward or subcontract.

In 2 C.F.R. § 176.30, the OMB defines the term "sub-award" to include a "legal instrument to provide support for the performance of any portion of the substantive project or program for which the recipient received this award and that the recipient awards to an eligible sub-recipient." A sub-recipient means a "non-Federal entity that expends Federal awards received from a pass-through entity to carry out a Federal program, but does not include an individual that is a beneficiary of such a program. A sub-recipient may also be a recipient of other Federal awards directly from a Federal awarding agency." (2 C.F.R. § 176.30)

Subcontract is defined as “a legal instrument used by a recipient for procurement of property and services needed to carry out the project or program.”

Note that the definition of a “sub-recipient” in 2 C.F.R. § 176.30 specifically excludes “the recipient’s procurement of property and services needed to carry out the project or program.” This section refers to OMB Circular A-133 to distinguish between a sub-recipient and a vendor. A vendor is defined in OMB Circular A-133 as "a dealer, distributor, merchant, or other seller providing goods or services that are required for the conduct of a Federal program. These goods or services may be for an organization's own use or for the use of beneficiaries of the Federal program."

Based on the fact that the Special Terms and Conditions flow down to all subawards and sub-contracts, and the fact that a vendor is not a subawardee, sub-recipient, or sub-contractor, the Recovery Act financial assistance recipient and sub-recipients are not required to flow down the Recovery Act's Special Terms and Conditions to vendors. However, financial assistance recipients, sub-recipients and subawardees are ultimately

responsible for complying with the Special Terms and Conditions, and should take whatever measures they deem necessary to ensure that the Buy American requirements of the Recovery Act are adhered to by their respective vendors.

**CONCLUSION:** Please be advised that the Department of Energy cannot answer all questions on a case-by-case basis concerning the appropriate levels of documentation needed to verify compliance with the Recovery Act Buy American provisions. Therefore, financial assistance recipients should consult with their legal counsel in order to ascertain whether they have secured adequate documentation in accordance with the Department of Energy's Financial Assistance Rules found at 10 C.F.R. § 600.220.

To summarize, recipients of EERE Recovery Act financial assistance should take the following steps toward demonstrating compliance with the Buy American provisions:

1. State and local governments and tribes must follow their own procurement policies and procedures, per 10 CFR 600.236, "Procurement", and are expected to maintain maximum oversight over their project and procurement activities with regards to Buy American compliance.
2. Recipients should maintain documentation at a level they feel is appropriate to show compliance with the Recovery Act Buy American provisions.
  - a. A list of recommended documentation is outlined above.
3. In addition, in order to ensure broader compliance with any potential audit, grantees should (1) determine whether a single audit or program audit is applicable (see OMB Circular A-133), and should then initiate the appropriate audit review process.
4. Moreover, grantees subject to OMB Circular A-133 should also maintain ongoing compliance with SEFA requirements (2 CFR 176.210 and OMB A-133 Compliance Supplement).

**Resources for further review:**

**Section 1605 (Buy American provisions) of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (Pub. L. 111-5)**

<http://ecfr.gpoaccess.gov/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=ecfr&sid=63f99139a28cbcd199c115ec9d34faf0&rgn=div5&view=text&node=2:1.1.1.2.3&idno=2>

**Full Text of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (Pub. L. 111-5)**

[http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=111\\_cong\\_bills&docid=f:h1enr.pdf](http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=111_cong_bills&docid=f:h1enr.pdf)

**Department of Energy's Financial Assistance Rules [10 C.F.R. Part600]**

[http://ecfr.gpoaccess.gov/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=ecfr&tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title10/10cfr600\\_main\\_02.tpl](http://ecfr.gpoaccess.gov/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=ecfr&tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title10/10cfr600_main_02.tpl)

**OMB Circular A-133:** This document identifies Audit roles and responsibilities pertaining to the State and local governments, including tribal entities.

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/rewrite/circulars/a133/a133.html>

**OMB Circular A-133 Compliance Supplement – Appendix VII**  
**Other OMB Circular A-133 Advisories:**

[http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/assets/a133\\_compliance/app\\_7.pdf](http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/assets/a133_compliance/app_7.pdf)

**2 CFR 176.210:** This section of the Code of Federal Regulations provides the guidelines for the required Recovery Act expenditure documentation pertaining to “Recovery Act Transactions Listed in the Schedule of Expenditures of Federal Awards and Recipient Responsibilities for Informing Sub-recipients.”

<http://ecfr.gpoaccess.gov/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=ecfr&sid=f03ceaca224c1a658c2ad682f212e869&rgn=div8&view=text&node=2:1.1.1.2.3.4.1.2&idno=2>

**Federal Audit Clearinghouse:** <http://harvester.census.gov/sac/>

**DOE Acquisition and Financial Assistance Implementation Guide for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009**

[http://management.energy.gov/policy\\_guidance/1672.htm](http://management.energy.gov/policy_guidance/1672.htm)



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